

ALUMNI ARE READY TO FIGHT FOR FRATS

Some Organizations Prepare Cases Against Possible Legislature Bill.

ARE STRONG IN PRAISE

Men in Business Name Good Points in Their School Societies.

SAY COSTS ARE SMALL

Old Members Declare Clubs Thrive on Suppression, Welcome Faculty Cooperation.

This is the fourth in a series of articles to appear in THE NEW YORK HERALD on this subject.

If the proposed bill prohibiting high school fraternities is seriously considered by the New York Legislature, as similar bills have been in other States, the hearings will be uninvited by strong opposition. Some of the Greek letter brotherhoods are already preparing their case. Others appear indifferent.

Graduates of city high schools who retain interest in fraternities to which they belonged when they were boys or girls insist that these organizations have positive merit. In addition they contend that the proposed law would not eliminate them, but would merely drive them under cover and would tend to make sneaks out of the boys and girls, who would join them all the faster if the sign "Forbidden" was raised. They say that the Board of Education, instead of trying to stifle the secret societies, should give them official sanction and allow them to continue under faculty supervision.

One of the fraternity enthusiasts is Bert W. Hendricks, a Brooklyn lawyer, graduate of Manual Training High School and Cornell University. As counsel for his high school society, Omega Gamma Delta, he made speeches in New Jersey last year, vainly trying to persuade the Legislature to kill an anti-fraternity bill. He says that although New York could not suppress fraternities if it tried, because the gregarious instinct is irrepressible, he will go to Albany and fight the bill even if Omega Gamma Delta has to fight alone.

Defends Secret Societies.

Eight years ago when the Board of Education adopted its anti-secret society by-law, Omega Gamma Delta resolved itself into what is called "open clubs." But according to Mr. Hendricks the Education Board did not enforce its own rules, and Omega Gamma Delta, after two years of "openness," and after seeing other Greek letter bands going along in the old way, did so too. But this way Mr. Hendricks warmly defended in a talk with a reporter for THE NEW YORK HERALD.

"The boys," he said, "meet in their own homes. Formerly the Mount Vernon chapter rented outside rooms, but they gave these up at the request of the alumni. The members of a chapter meet every two weeks, usually on a Friday evening, in the house of the parents of a member, and as they go from house to house the parents see whom their sons are associating with. Every chapter is under the observation of a delegate at large assigned by the

national council of the fraternity. Each delegate is responsible to the national council for the scholarship and good conduct of the chapter in his charge. These alumni attend the chapter meetings. Each chapter has a dance once a year. The Brooklyn dances are usually held at the St. George Hotel. The grand council has two dances a year at the Hotel Pennsylvania. Tickets for the New York dances usually cost \$5 and for the Brooklyn dances \$2.50. Each boy in a chapter pays an initiation fee of \$5 a year, which is split between the chapter and the national council, and dues of 25 cents a month. The plan which he buys, but is not allowed to wear at school, costs less than \$10. Our East Orange chapter has raised \$900 toward a \$1,500 scholarship to send some needy boy to college from the East Orange High School, and the Paterson chapter \$400 for a similar purpose.

"It is charged that fraternity boys are the lowest in scholarship. In Manual Training High School, Brooklyn, a fraternity boy has always been the leader of the scholarship society. Arista. The student body at Manual Training, known as the general organization, has chosen by the pupils and officers chosen by the pupils and faculty. In all but two of the twenty-six elections that have been held a fraternity boy or sorority girl has been elected president. And, mind you, candidates have to be approved by the faculty as to scholarship as well as character before they can even be nominated. Then there is the Hinch scholarship trophy awarded to the member of the football squad, who, during the fall term averages highest in all subjects. A fraternity boy has won it every year.

Don't Control Elections.

"It is also charged that the Greek letter societies control student body elections. In Manual Training High School I am speaking of the school I know most about—there are about 6,000 pupils. Not more than seventy-five of them belong to fraternities. There is no question that the members of a fraternity hang together and vote as a unit, but it is ridiculous to say that seventy-five boys can dominate 6,000. "Another charge is that fraternities have no use for a fellow unless he has money. In all my experience in the local chapter and the national council I have never heard money or the lack of it discussed. It is one of the cardinal principles of our society that money must not count. For five or six years the poorest boy in our Brooklyn chapter was its president.

"The accusation oftenest heard is that these societies are undemocratic. They are not. They are merely a manifestation of human nature. Wherever you go, I don't care what school it is, or whether it is in school or out of school, similar tastes and training will flock together as a sort of clan, and so will girls, and so will men and women, for that matter. They will continue to do that no matter how many laws are passed.

"Our fraternity would welcome faculty supervision, and I believe that many of the teachers would like to join with us as faculty members if the rules of the Board of Education did not forbid it. We are willing to get together with the Board of Education and determine reasonable fees for the boys to pay if the present fees are thought to be too high. We would cheerfully accept any reasonable regulation. In fact, it would be a good thing, for any fraternity man will admit that although the ideals of his society are right they are not always realized, and they would come nearer to being realized if the fraternities and the schools could cooperate instead of the latter carrying on the pretense of obliterating the former.

"The secrecy of fraternities is a myth. The boys may have a queer way of

grabbing one another's hands when they meet, and they may have a grip and a password, and the chairs may be arranged in a peculiar fashion when the boys gather for a session at some fellow's home, but that's as far as it goes. The 'secret proceedings' the critics of fraternities talk so much about consists of a painful wait for food and a healthy dash for it when the host's mother announces that the spread is ready.

"High school fraternities were nearly dead in 1910. Then school boards and Legislatures tried to suppress them. The result is that they are flourishing today. Let a prohibitory law be passed in this State and they'll flourish more than ever. Nevertheless the principle of attempted suppression is wrong and, as I said, we are going to fight."

Another man who protests against the proposed law is Murray T. Quigg, lawyer of 42 Broadway. When he attended De Witt Clinton High School he was at the head of the Gamma Epsilon Kappa fraternity. He has a Harvard degree and the years between have not erased his fondness for it.

"Among human beings," Mr. Quigg said, "social distinctions are bound to be made. Boys bind their friendships by secret and peculiar ties exactly as men do. This is a fact not to be avoided or legislated out of existence. The fraternal feeling and provide meeting places for members." Anything vicious about that? In most of the chapters the alumni attend the meetings. They teach

the boys parliamentary rules and also watch over them. It is not true that fraternity boys go to pieces in their studies. Without boasting I may note that I was both a fraternity member and an "honor man" at Manual Training High School, and there were many others. If a member slipped in his work the chapter gave him a note to his faculty

adviser and he had to pull himself up. That's the way to do it. Don't compel fraternities to exist surreptitiously, don't make sneaks out of school boys. There is positive good in fraternities, and it can be brought out by supervision."

Another article in this series will appear in an early issue.

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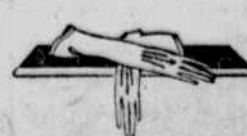
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